

Sent by email only to:

Chair of Council Planning Committees
cc: Council Chief Executives
Council Heads of Planning

22 May 2026

Dear Chair,

Planning Improvement Learning and Engagement Programme – Ministerial Engagement

Further to our correspondence on 13 January 2026, the Planning Improvement Task and Finish Advisory Group meeting took place on 18 May 2026 as part of the wider Planning Improvement Learning and Engagement Programme.

Through NILGA's planning improvement engagement work with DfI and Solace NI, elected Members from Planning Committees engaged with the DfI Chief Planner, Rosemary Daly, on the challenges and opportunities within the planning system, and on how elected members can be supported to make sound and defensible decisions.

The discussion generated valuable practical insight, examples of good practice, and a clearer shared understanding of the areas where further support and improvement activity may be beneficial. NILGA is now working with DfI and Solace NI to reflect these issues in draft proposals for a future programme of work, and we will engage further with councils in due course as that develops.

A key strand of the wider planning improvement learning and engagement programme has been to strengthen direct political engagement between the Minister and Council Planning Committees, ensuring that local government experience and elected member perspectives can help inform the ongoing improvement agenda.

As such, we are pleased to invite you, or a nominated representative from your Planning Committee, to attend a meeting with Minister Liz Kimmins MLA on 18 June 2026 at James House, Cromac Avenue, Belfast BT7 2JB at 10am.

A draft agenda is included below for your consideration and, if helpful, for discussion with your Planning Committee and/or officers. To support effective engagement, NILGA will also arrange a short local government pre-meeting online to assist participants in identifying key themes, shared issues and constructive points for discussion in advance of the Ministerial meeting.


Northern Ireland Local Government Association

Bradford Court, Upper Galwally, Castlereagh, BT8 6RB

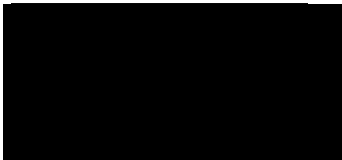
Tel: 028 9079 8972 email: office@nilga.org web: www.nilga.org twitter: @NI_LGA

DRAFT AGENDA

- 10:00 Arrival & Refreshments / Informal networking opportunity
- 10:30 Welcome & Opening Remarks
- 10:40 Ministerial Scene-Setting: Planning in Context
- 11:00 Planning Improvement Programme: Findings & Priorities
- 11:15 Elected Member Perspectives – regional and strategic issues
- 12:15 Feedback & Agreed Actions
- 12:25 Next Steps & Closing Remarks

Please confirm your attendance or the attendance of your nominated Planning Committee representative to @nilga.org no later than 10 June 2026.

Yours sincerely



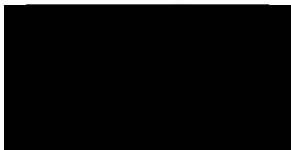
Cllr Billy Webb, MBE JP
President (All)



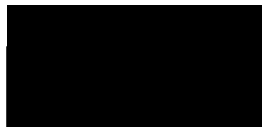
Cllr Matt Garrett
Vice-President (Sinn Fein)



Cllr Alison Bennington
Vice-President (DUP)



Ald Hazel Legge
Vice-President (UUP)



Cllr Carl Whyte
Vice-President (SDLP)

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